

32 COMMUNICATIONS IN REFERENCE TO VESSELS OBSERVED

Was it a good or indifferent glass?
It was a fair common ship's spy-glass.

Did the master of the "Renovation" come up to look at them?
My impression is he did not.

Was the iceberg to windward or leeward?
To windward, I think.

Might not the "Renovation" have stood nearer to the berg, to reconnoitre, without danger?

I think she might; but the captain was ill, and the mate and himself not having been among ice before, were timid.

Was the master too ill to have taken charge of the "Renovation's" deck for a few hours?

Indeed he was; he was confined to his bed, and very ill.

Did you, while in sight of the berg, speak to the master about closing it to make out the vessels, and if so, what was his reply?

I did speak to him, but he said "it was too hazardous to attempt it." The "Renovation" was an old vessel, built in 1811, and the master was timid in the ice, and a little irritable from sickness; else he was a man to risk his life to save a dog.

When did you first observe that you thought they were Sir John Franklin's ships?

On first seeing them; that is, as soon as I had carefully observed their condition.

Are you positive it was before they were astern?

Oh, yes, positive.

Did you hear any other person on board propose to close the berg, or volunteer to go in a boat to examine the vessels?

No, I did not.

Do you remember the cook of the "Renovation"?

I do; he was an old man, entered as cook and A.B., and I think his name was Scott.

Did he offer to go in a boat?

No; I positively deny it. He was unable to go, as he was ill with dysentery, as were two other men also.

Were the master or crew aware of the reward offered for the discovery of Sir John Franklin?

I think not; as in conversation the mate observed to me that the chronometers and instruments (if they were the ships) would be a fortune to any one who got them.

How far apart were the vessels?

From three quarters to a mile at least. To the naked eye there seemed dark specks between them, but with the spy-glass they seemed only hummocks of ice.

It has been suggested that no vessels were seen in reality, but that they were optical delusions, produced by reflection or mirage?

I am positive they were ships, as I examined and noticed the smallest visible details.

Did you observe their rudders, or anything being at their sterns?

I did not; but I particularly noticed that there were no boats about them.

Did you observe a raised poop, topgallant forecastle, or caboose on either vessel?

On the upright vessel there was what I took to be a caboose, but I cannot say as to the poop or forecastle.

Were their yards squared or topp'd on end?

They were squared, and I think the yardarms of the vessel on her beam ends rested on the ice. I am positive she had no topmast up; they were not housed over; the upright vessel had her topmasts up, and lower and topsail yards squared. I did not notice any gaffs.

Was her topgallant rigging unrove or aloft?

I think it must have been down, as it was the lightness aloft and compactness of both vessels that first struck me at the time. Had there been any appearance of wreck about them, I should not have taken so much notice. It struck me they were consorts, and Sir John Franklin's vessels.

The mate and you differed as to the disparity of tonnage; what, in your opinion, was it?
From their appearance, nothing like 100 tons.

Were they housed over, are you positive?

I am quite positive they were not.

When you say they were full-rigged, do you mean to discriminate between ships and barques, or merely to state that they were three-masted vessels?

I think, I am positive, they were both full rigged, and had mizen yards. I am sure the smaller one was so.